

# NEVADA COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

## **(DRAFT) Position on Deaf Schools for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

Education is a fundamental right and a critical pathway to success for all individuals, including those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH), Deaf/Blind (DB), and Deaf or Hard of Hearing + (D/HH+). While Nevada currently lacks dedicated Deaf schools, it is essential to recognize the unique educational needs of D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students and the benefits such institutions can provide. Deaf schools are vital in delivering tailored educational environments, cultural enrichment, and specialized resources, including audiologists, speech therapists, and bilingual-bicultural programs that support both oral and signing methods of communication.

**The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocates for strengthening educational opportunities for D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students in Nevada by exploring the establishment of Deaf schools and consolidating resources to enhance their educational experience. Deaf schools in other states have demonstrated their critical role in addressing the linguistic, social, and educational needs of D/HH students, fostering academic success, and promoting self-advocacy and inclusion.**

**Policy Recommendations:** Educational opportunities for D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ individuals in Nevada must adequately include the following:

- 1. Explore the Establishment of Deaf Schools in Nevada:**
  - Investigate the feasibility of creating Deaf schools to serve as specialized educational hubs for D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students.
  - Develop partnerships with existing Deaf schools in neighboring states to learn best practices and build a foundation for success.
- 2. Consolidate and Strengthen Resources:**
  - Ensure access to on-site audiologists who can monitor hearing development and provide individualized interventions.
  - Increase availability of speech therapists to deliver tailored communication support.
  - Provide both oral and signing programs, empowering families to choose the communication methods that best suit their needs.
- 3. Enhance Access to Bilingual-Bicultural Education:**
  - Support a bilingual-bicultural approach that promotes fluency in both American Sign Language (ASL) and English, fostering inclusivity and academic achievement.
- 4. Develop Inclusive Educational Policies:**
  - Advocate for the inclusion of D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students in mainstream educational settings while ensuring access to specialized services.
  - Provide training for educators and school administrators on the unique needs of D/HH students.
- 5. Raise Awareness and Educate Lawmakers:**
  - Educate policymakers on the importance of Deaf schools and specialized educational resources for D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students.
  - Host workshops and community forums to highlight the benefits of tailored educational environments for the D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ community.

**Proposed Next Steps (Call to Action):** Nevada must prioritize the educational needs of D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students by exploring the establishment of Deaf schools and strengthening existing resources. By investing in specialized educational environments and fostering collaboration among educators, policymakers, and the community, we can ensure that D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students in Nevada have equitable opportunities to succeed.

**Conclusion:** Education is a fundamental right for all individuals, including those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, and Deaf or Hard of Hearing +. While Nevada currently lacks Deaf schools, the need to address the unique educational requirements of D/HH, DB, and D/HH+ students remain critical. By advocating for the development of Deaf schools and consolidating resources, we can create an inclusive and supportive educational system that empowers every student to achieve their full potential.